

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SS-20 SSO-00 ISO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 SAJ-01 PRS-01 PA-04 USIE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01

EB-11 /096 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:RDVINE:JKB

APPROVED BY EUR:AAHARTMAN

INR - DMARK

S/S- MR. SPRINGSTEEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 038993

TOSEC 135 TODEP 53

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH CABINET SHUFFLE

1. THE RESIGNATION OF FRENCH PRIME MINISTER PIERRE MESSMER'S GOVERNMENT THIS MORNING APPEARS TO BE ONLY THE OCCASION FOR A RESHUFFLING OF THE PRESENT CABINET. IT SEEMS TO BE AN EFFORT TO RESTRUCTURE AND STRENGTHEN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN THE FACE OF THE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC CRITICISM WHICH HAS BEEN DIRECTED AT IT IN RECENT MONTHS.

2. PRESIDENT POMPIDOU SEEMS TO WANT TO DRAMATIZE THE FACT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS EFFECTIVE, DYNAMIC AND CAPABLE OF MEETING CURRENT PROBLEMS.

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3. A NEW GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO BE NAMED BY POMPIDOU VERY QUICKLY, POSSIBLY EVEN TODAY. BACKGROUND FROM THE ELYSEE SUGGESTS THAT MESSMER WILL REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER, WITH A RESOUNDING PUBLIC STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN HIM BY POMPIDOU. IF MESSMER WERE TO BE REPLACED, HOWEVER, A SUCCESSOR MIGHT WELL BE SOMEONE WHOM POMPIDOU WOULD VIEW AS A CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED HIM IN THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

4. ASSUMING THAT MESSMER IS REAPPOINTED, WE EXPECT JOBERT AND GISCARD TO REMAIN IN A RESHUFFLED CABINET. THE MAIN CABINET CHANGES WILL PROBABLY CENTER AROUND THE

GOVERNMENT'S CAPABILITY TO MEET ENERGY PROBLEMS AND RELATED ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. MARGINAL MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLITICAL LIABILITIES LIKE INTERIOR MINISTER MARCELLIN, MAY BE DROPPED.

5. WE DO NOT CONSIDER THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT WILL INVOLVE ANY CHANGE IN FRENCH FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICIES. CASEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, TOSEC 135, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: rowelle0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE038993
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RDVINE:JKB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974025/aaaaaeos.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: rowelle0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <02-Oct-2002 by rowelle0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH CABINET SHUFFLE
TAGS: PGOV, FR
To: JERUSALEM MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005